depreciation at the rate of 50%. Cost of machinery has also been reduced through Fiscal Policy measures. This further encourages modernisation.

iv. With a view to making fabric production competitive, the custom duty on shuttleless looms has been brought from 15% to 5%.

v. National Institute for Fashion Technology (NIFT), its six branches and Apparel Training & Design Centres (ATDCs) are running various courses/programmes to meet skilled manpower requirements of textile industry especially apparel in the field of design, merchandising and marketing.

vi. Facilities by way of eco-testing laboratories have been created to enable exporters to get the garments/textiles pre-tested for conforming to the requirements of importing countries.

vii. The Government has launched a centrally sponsored scheme titled "Apparel Park for Export Scheme" for imparting focused thrust for setting up of apparel manufacturing units of international standards at potential growth centres and to give fillip to exports.

viii. For upgrading infrastructure facilities at important textile centers, a scheme "Textile Centre Infrastructure Development Scheme" (TCIDS) has been launched.

ix. The Export Promotion Councils have been undertakings export promotion events like participation in overseas exhibitions/fairs, organizing BSMs abroad, sponsoring trade delegations in consultation with Indian Missions abroad.

Fund to help distressed Former Sports Greats

†1420. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to institute a fund to help the sports persons who brought fame to India at regional, State, country and/or international levels and who are now suffering from incurable diseases or facing financial problems; and

(b) if so, by when and the details thereof?

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI SUNIL DUTT): (a) and (b) Government of India is already implementing a scheme entitled "National Welfare Fund for Sportspersons" to help the outstanding sports-persons of yesteryears living in indigent circumstances. *Inter-alia*, the scheme is designed to provide suitable assistance to outstanding sportspersons who bring glory to the country in the national and international field and who are disables as an after effect of their strenuous training or otherwise and to provide them assistance by way of medical treatment or through grant of monthly pension or both, depending on the merits of the case.

The fund has been constituted under the above mentioned scheme and is supported by regular budget of the Ministry. The fund can also be used to promote the welfare of certain categories of sportspersons in order to alleviate distress among them and their dependents. For management and administration of the Fund, a high level General Committee has been constituted.

Foreign coaches for Archery

1421. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to hire foreign coaches to train Indian youth in archery for the next Olympics;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to offer exclusive scholarship for Indian students interested in archery; and

(d) if so, the details of such plan for the next four years?

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI SUNIL DUTT): (a) and (b) Archery Association of India (AAI) has requested for the services of a foreign coach for Archery upto Asian Games 2006 and the committee constituted for selection of foreign coaches has recommended his engagement for training of elite archers in the country.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. There is an on-going scheme implemented by the Ministry, through Sports Authority of India, under which archers are also eligible for scholarship like other categories of sports as per the norms of the scheme.